

floor. As a result, every Member is now receiving \$169,300 this year, a \$4,100 increase from last year.

Madam Speaker, the American people didn't get a \$4,100 pay raise this year. I do not know how in good conscience we, as their Representatives in Congress, can accept one.

Our Nation is at war, we have a national debt of more than \$9 trillion, and fears of a recession have sent the stock market into a tailspin. Unemployment is up, home sales are down, and markets around the world are on shaky ground.

In December, the unemployment rate rose in 46 States as well as the District of Columbia.

In my home State of Arizona, unemployment rose 42 percent between September and December alone, leaving 143,800 unemployed.

Compounding the situation, nationwide inflation shot up 6 percent in 2007, the largest jump in 26 years. The same gallon of gas that cost \$2.20 a year ago now costs more than \$3—and new home construction dropped 25 percent, the largest decrease in 27 years.

When Members of Congress accept this pay raise, we send the wrong message.

Americans are suffering and instead of feeling that pain, Congress is approving pay raises to further insulate us from it. If you want to know why people hate Washington and feel that it is out of touch, it is precisely because of moves like this.

I will be donating my 2008 pay raise to charity and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

I also encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 5087 to stop next year's pay raise for Members of Congress.

IN RECOGNITION OF MR. DANIEL BRINSON

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a distinguished young man from my district, Mr. Daniel Brinson.

Daniel, a Montgomery native, is currently a sophomore at Auburn University and a member of the Nu Chapter of the Kappa Alpha Order. In late September of 2007, Daniel was traveling with a friend, Terrell Webb, when the pair came upon an accident. Both cars involved were in flames off the side of the roadway. Daniel and his companion approached the vehicles and heard cries for help. In an act of selfless courage Brinson and Webb forced their way into one of the cars and pulled one of the occupants, a young woman, away from danger. The young woman has since overcome serious injuries to make a full recovery.

Mr. Brinson's unflinching willingness to risk his safety to help others is an example for all Alabamians. I salute Daniel for his service to his neighbors, and wish him the best in his future endeavors.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Ms. SOLIS. Madam Speaker, during Rollcall vote No. 18 on Final Passage of Hope VI Reauthorization, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye".

HOPELESS IN AFRICA? DOING SOMETHING ABOUT IT

HON. PAUL C. BROWN

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. BROWN of Georgia. Madam Speaker, like millions of Americans, when reminded of the facts and photographs of the millions of souls in Africa that are malnourished and lack even the basic necessities of life, I wring my hands at the enormity of the problem.

I recently read an article by Wes Vernon regarding the sad plight of those in Kenya, but what lifted my spirits was what the author said was being accomplished to help these people. Rather than do nothing because of the enormity of the problem, or simply demand that the U.S. Government provide ever increasing amounts of foreign aid, American citizens with a vision and a burden to help those less fortunate have decided to take action.

People from as far as East Africa all the way to Marietta, Georgia have joined hands to create the United Orphanage and Academy. They are doing great work, and I commend them for their efforts, their initiative, and their selfless compassion.

I commend this article to your reading and submit it to the RECORD for posterity. Thank you.

[From RenewAmerica, Jan. 12, 2008]

HOPELESS IN AFRICA? DOING SOMETHING ABOUT IT

(By Wes Vernon)

Herewith, the classic example of a humanitarian and selfless effort linked in a very meaningful way to our strategic interests in a far-off part of the world, and incidentally the effectiveness of volunteer effort as opposed to taxpayer-funded giveaways.

KENYA'S FUTURE AND AMERICA'S SECURITY

In the War on Islamofascism, the United States has a very firm ally in Kenya—one of our best friends on the African continent. That assumes Kenya remains stable. President Mwai Kibaki was recently re-elected. His opponents don't like the outcome and their protests have at times become violent and bloody. Under Kibaki's government, Kenya has—since 9/11—provided us with military bases, and shared intelligence to head off at Qaeda's inroads in Africa. That has been backed up by communications networks.

Retired Lt. Gen. Michael DeLong recently told the Washington Times that Kenya is "strategically located," and that a failed state in Kenya would erase "one of the top friendly militaries to the United States in Africa."

FROM THE HEART, RATHER THAN THE TAXMAN'S SHAKEDOWN

During the holidays, Americans were served up a steady stream of TV ads urging

them to prod the presidential candidates to promise to feed the world's starving.

There is a premise there that deserves a fair amount of dissection.

In the first place, the assumption the problem of the world's needy can most effectively be remedied by an entanglement in the morass of presidential politics. I have yet to hear a candidate for any office declare on the stump, "And furthermore, if elected, I promise that I will dish out more of your tax money for foreign aid."

Not that the American electorate is cold-hearted or indifferent to the hunger problem in third-world countries. Every study that this column has seen on the subject confirms that Americans are the most generous people in the world. But over the years, they have heard some horror stories about how aid we have sent to the far corners of the earth has failed to reach the poor people for whom it was intended after corrupt politicians there got their hands on it. For U.N. aid—also funded by you and me—the results of aid projects have been even worse. That is why even the most compassionate among us are cynical about government-run "foreign aid."

I once approached a congressman just off the House floor to interview him on a foreign aid bill that only seconds before he had eloquently urged his colleagues to pass. I thought the man would have a stroke. "Foreign aid? That's not a popular issue! You know that!" he reproached me while emphatically declining the interview.

NOW SPECIFICALLY WITH REGARD TO KENYA

In a land overwhelmed by poverty, pestilence, corruption, and perpetual war, there is an instinct to throw up your hands and give up. For those not willing to walk away from digging out of that appearance (at first blush) of a relentless quicksand in Sub-Saharan Africa, there is—as a shining example of hope—the United Orphanage and Academy.

STARTING SOMEWHERE

In that part of the world, there are heart-rending examples of despair wherever you look. No one capable of human feelings can ignore a hungry and/or sick child. Shelters have been known to run out of food in trying to alleviate starvation.

Also in that part of the world—a place not normally on everyone's radar—the difficulty in dealing with the "impossible" is all the more acute. Many life-threatening birth defects can be treated in the Western world. Not necessarily so in Africa.

Much the same applies to blindness. If there is an effective preventive measure, we will find it here in America. The odds are longer in much of Africa.

And then there are the kids who have been orphaned—often through the ravages of war. Twelve million kids in the region have been orphaned by parents who died of the HIV-Aids pandemic. Add famine and unsafe drinking water to the mix, and you can see that many of God's children are in desperate straits.

THE HISTORY

The United Orphanage and Academy is the brainchild of the Rev. Stephen N. Chege, Pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church of East Africa (the orphanage's director) and Washington attorney Henri (pronounced Henry) Rush of the Westminster Presbyterian Church of Alexandria, VA. They founded the orphanage in 2001. The facility opened its doors in 2004 as a home for six orphaned children. It now houses the 48 kids (31 girls and 17 boys, ages 4 to 15 years old).

Since its founding, the orphanage has been supported by Westminster; Old Presbyterian Meeting House (Alexandria); Lewinsville Presbyterian Church (McLean, Virginia);

Mary Queen of Peace (a Catholic church outside of New Orleans), and the First Presbyterian church of Marietta, GA. Members from Westminster, the meeting House, and St. Leo's Catholic Church in northern Virginia shared in the celebration of the second anniversary of its opening.

THE LOCATION AND FACILITIES

The orphanage is in a rural area in north-west Kenya near the border with Uganda. The area is known as Moi's Bridge. Boys' and girls' dormitories are included, as are a dining room and kitchen, along with office space and a classroom. Fresh water is provided by a rain water cistern and deep water well. There is a generator for electric power, and in 2007 the facility was connected to the national electric power network.

The current needs include \$50,000 to purchase a bus as the academy grows serving more children, drawn from Moi's Bridge—population 5000.

STILL A WORK IN PROGRESS, BUT STEADILY GROWING

The academy part of the orphanage operation opened in 2006, and now hosts classes from pre-kindergarten through fifth grade, staffed with a teacher for each of the six classes. That is a significant advancement.

Most children in the area attend five different public schools which are distant and overcrowded. (Can you imagine 90 to 110 students per teacher? The norm for even the worst inner-city schools in the Western nations usually manages to avoid that impossible-to-teach ratio). The academy will maintain a ratio of no more than 35 students per teacher.

In addition to the younger children of the orphanage who are enrolled in the academy, students from the surrounding community are also included.

The academy is in the process of building a \$70,000 permanent stone three-story building to house twelve classes. The plan is to

add one additional class each year up through twelfth grade.

THE CHILDREN

The children at the United Orphanage and Academy come from five distinct ethnic backgrounds among the different tribes that inhabit the areas in the neighborhood. In fact, co-mingling and reconciliation of kids from various ethnic backgrounds stood out as a founding principle. The word "United" in the facility's name was picked as an expression of efforts toward the kind of understanding from which not only Africa, but the entire world, would benefit.

The point was made in our interviews (by phone and e-mail) with Henri Rush. Set children on that path, and the prospects for the future become more positive. And he added, "This has become important in the face of the recently electorally-spawned ethnic violence."

That unrest does not threaten the academy itself, however, as Rush adds, "Although there have been killings and house burnings as close as one kilometer from UO&A, the regional authorities have assured Director Chege that the children and the staff and the facility will be protected by them." Classes were scheduled to re-open for 2008 on January 14, offering curriculum up to the fifth grade, a significant advance. Furthermore, the infrastructure of the school is being upgraded—from multiple wood frame classroom blocks to single permanent stone buildings.

Ultimately, Rush says the academy intends also to provide vocational education for children not suited to pursuing post high school education.

"This will insure that all of our children will be able to lead useful productive lives and contribute to the well-being of the community," he adds, "For those that show academic promise, we plan to raise sufficient funds to enable them to attend college in Kenya with a view to their becoming leaders

of the community, region, or even, God willing, the Nation." Make no mistake: These kids will be around to serve as payback to their community, the nation, and—we dare say—the world.

THE BIG PICTURE

We are at a point in history when the world appears poised for a clash of cultures with the possibility of the "mother of all showdowns." Governments and international organizations—by and large—have made a mess of things. We are going to have to pitch in and do the rebuilding. That starts with the basics, offering help to those in need.

There are many ways of doing that, and the United Orphanage and Academy bears a striking resemblance to one of what the first President Bush referred to as "a thousand points of light," a means by which we roll up our sleeves and do it ourselves.

OVERHEAD? NOT HERE

Every charity has to have at least a little bit of overhead, I said to Henri Rush in an interview.

"Absolutely not," he replied, "I am the overhead," with donations of time (and though he didn't specify it, no doubt a fair amount of money). He added a church bookkeeper is "overhead, but she also donates her time."

WHERE YOU COME IN

You can play a part in the success of this shining "point of light."

Tax deductible checks can be sent to Westminster Presbyterian Church, 2701 Cameron Mills Road, Alexandria, VA 22301, or Old Presbyterian Meeting House, Alexandria, VA 22314. Note United Orphanage on the memo line.

Again—no overhead, no U.N. or government bureaucracy. Your money goes straight to the kids. You can't beat that for the "up and up."